

STATE OF MARYLAND

MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT

Shari T. Wilson, Secretary

BILL NO: HB 248

COMMITTEE: Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

POSITION: Support

TITLE: Task Force to Study Strategies to Reduce Solid Waste

BILL ANALYSIS: The bill establishes a task force to study issues relevant to the management of solid waste processes in the State and strategies for reducing, reusing, and recycling waste material. It would consist of: one member of the Senate; two members of the House of Delegates; the Secretary of the Environment; a representative of county government appointed by the Maryland Association of Counties; a representative of a municipal government appointed by the Maryland Municipal League; and a representative of the Product Stewardship Institute. The Governor would designate the chair of the Task Force and appoint the following members: three representatives of different businesses that specialize in the handling of solid waste; one representative of the Maryland Environmental Service; one representative of the farming community; one representative of retail industry; one representative of the bottling and beverage industry; two representatives who are involved in the business of recycling; and three representatives of the public. The Department would staff the Task Force and be required to provide travel expenses for the members. The Task Force would be required to provide an interim report, on or before December 31, 2009, and provide a final report on its findings and recommendations to the Governor and the General Assembly, on or before December 1, 2010. Without further action by the General Assembly, the Act would be abrogated and of no further force and effect at the end of May 31, 2011.

POSITION AND RATIONALE: The Department supports House Bill 248. This bill acknowledges the role that decreasing solid waste generation and increasing recycling in Maryland plays in reducing

greenhouse gas emissions, energy consumption, potential environmental impacts from landfills and incinerators, and use of raw materials.

By establishing a task force to study the many issues related to the management of solid waste and reuse and recycling, the Department will have an opportunity to participate in meaningful discussions with important stakeholders to come to common understandings regarding such timely topics as: current solid waste disposal practices; effectiveness of the Maryland Recycling Act; potential expansion of uses of the State Recycling Trust Fund; issues concerning materials such as plastics, packaging waste, beverage containers, plastic bags, household hazardous waste, oil filters, pharmaceuticals, batteries, and carpeting; encouraging product stewardship; developing new markets for recycling and reuse of materials; generation of alternative energy sources; and developing a waste reduction strategy. The Department welcomes the assistance of stakeholders in addressing these often complicated and contentious issues.

Studying the issues relevant to solid waste processes in the State and developing strategies for reducing, reusing, and recycling waste material in Maryland would provide needed information to the State and to stakeholders as the Department moves forward with implementation of the Climate Action Plan.

FOR MORE INFORMATION,
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